

VZCZCXYZ0030
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHKB #0710/01 0791310
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 201310Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1965
INFO RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC 0051

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 000710

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PINR](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: SPLA,S CIRILO WORRIED ABOUT SAF MOVES, MOTIVES
REF: KHARTOUM 633

Classified By: POL Eric Whitaker for reasons: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Officials from Consulate General (CG) Juba held a follow-up meeting on March 14 with Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) Brigadier General Thomas Cirilo, commander of SPLA Joint Integrated Unit (JIU) forces (reftel). General Cirilo said that all SPLA JIU troops had now received their full salaries for January. Other slowdowns continue, which Cirilo attributed to Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) leaders not trusting southerners in their ranks. He believes the SAF will only allow northerners to be part of the JIUs. Cirilo also thinks that many southerners in the SAF would defect if hostilities resumed. In the same meeting, Cirilo explained that he was worried about SAF restructuring and redeployments around Wau, where he said SAF-loyal South Sudanese Defense Forces (SSDF) are replacing regular SAF troops to ensure deniability in any incident. On the SPLA side, Cirilo was concerned that discipline will become a problem for troops in Juba if they cannot move into real barracks before the rainy season begins in earnest. End Summary.

SPLA JIUs Paid, But Still Waiting for SAF

¶2. (SBU) Cirilo indicated that little had changed with the JIUs since the meeting a week earlier with CG Juba officials (reftel). The most significant development was that the salaries for SPLA JIUs were now paid in full for January. He was glad he could start paying his men, but he was also concerned that the Government of National Unity (GNU) Ministry of Finance would continue to be slow in disbursing salaries as a way of destabilizing the JIUs. He said that partial payments were worse than nothing at all; if everyone has nothing then they are all suffering together. If they can only pay some people and not others, the ones who do not get paid will complain and may take negative action. He said that he would prefer a mechanism for payment that bypasses the Khartoum government, although he did not explain what that approach might be.

¶3. (SBU) Cirilo said that he had just met with his SAF counterpart in Juba, Major General Mohammed Ishmail, but that there had been no progress on deployment of SAF troops into the southern JIUs, or on allowing SPLA JIUs to move into the barracks in Juba. Now that the rains have started, moving into barracks becomes more urgent. Cirilo expected discipline problems, and perhaps even protests, if the SPLA had to remain outside in the rains. Despite this, Gen. Ishmail would only promise to "look into" the matter.

¶4. (C) CG Juba officials asked Cirilo about Torit, where SPLA troops and SAF troops were reportedly living, dining, and playing soccer together. Cirilo said that this is not a JIU operation. While the SPLA troops in Torit had been

designated as JIUs, the SAF troops were very specifically not called JIUs and the SAF had said other troops would be sent to join the JIUs. He said this was because the SAF would only allow northerners to be in the JIUs out of loyalty concerns.

15. (C) Cirilo also indicated that the SAF had good reason for its concerns. He said that a large group of southern SAF soldiers were recently demobilized, and they immediately joined the SPLA, which scared the SAF. Cirilo believes that the SAF will probably not demobilize any more southerners, but simply redeploy them to the north, where they can keep a better eye on them. Cirilo also said that some SAF southerners had confided in him that they would never again "turn their guns on their brothers" and that many had offered to defect to the SPLA, but Cirilo told them it was better if they stayed with the SAF.

SAF Moves Worrisome

16. (C) General Cirilo said that he did not know what to make of the reshuffling of the SAF leadership, but was concerned that it might negatively affect SPLA relationships. He thinks that there are five possible reasons for the change: moderates in the SAF are pushing out fundamentalists, fundamentalists in the SAF are pushing out moderates, the officers were caught planning a coup, GNU President Bashir is trying to isolate Vice President Ali Osman Taha, or it is just normal turnover of command. Cirilo said what concerned him most is that he did not know, so he was going to watch carefully what happens.

17. (C) Of more immediate concern is the redeployment of SAF troops in and around Wau. Cirilo said that the SAF had been pulling back to Wau and then deploying SAF-loyal SSDF troops to checkpoints and former SAF positions throughout Bahr al-Ghazal, which borders Abyei (Comment: CG Juba was unable to confirm this redeployment. End Comment.). He was concerned that this was a prelude to a repeat of the recent attack on SPLA-loyal SSDF units outside of Abyei. Cirilo believes that the SAF will continue to provide arms, ammunition, and salaries to SSDF troops, deploy them to tense areas, incite them to violence, and then step back and claim no responsibility for what happens.

Bio Data

18. (U) Cirilo is a Bari from Juba. Before joining the SPLA, he was a major in the SAF, and is a graduate of the SAF military academy. He defected in 1992 following the bloody northern crackdown on Juba. By 1997, he was in command of the SPLA troops attacking Juba.

STEINFELD